

REMARKS

Claims 14-27 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claim 20 has been withdrawn as the result of a election requirement.

Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 14-19, 21, 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Limberger (U.S. Patent No. 3,759,598) in view of Taub (U.S. Patent No. 4,010,698). Applicants traverse these rejections because the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the claim limitations.

The Examiner continues to argue that Limberger discloses all the features of the rejected claims, except that the panels are in a curvature; whereas Taub provides a curvature for the panels. Applicants first note that the Examiner has not responded substantively to the arguments in the previous amendment. Rather, the Examiner repeats his previous arguments and simply states that Applicants' arguments were not persuasive and that Taub teaches a panel with connection structure as claimed able to function as claimed. Applicants continue to disagree for at least the reasons contained below.

Page 7, lines 5-10, of the present application expressly states that the structure of the application is provided of longitudinal hooks 22 on the uprights 12, which act together with corner plates 24 to "secure restrainingly support side panels 13, 13a and at the same time impart to them a curvature with a convexity away from the zone in which the components of machine M are housed". Figure 4 makes clear that the side panels 13, 13a are bent in the assembling step and their ends are blocked between the ends of the relative plates 24 and a respective hook 22.

One of skill in the art would not have found this solution to be obvious by the combination of the patents to Limberger and Taub, because these references refer to different concepts of mounting external panels for covering an inner space of a machine. The panels (16) in Limberger are completely flat and can be made of glass. They are cut to standard sizes and fit into grooves (35a, 35b) provided on guides (34a, 34b) solid with the uprights (11). They are fitted on the uprights by simple insertion inside the guides, probably from above. It cannot be said that the panels (16) are supported under restraint in the sense intended in the present application (and in the independent claims), since no force of deformation ("*impart them a curvature*") is applied by the guides (34a, 34b) to the panels (16). The guides (34a, 34b) only act as positioning means in order to maintain the panels in an erect and stable position.

Therefore, the panels (16) disclosed in Limberger do not give any contribution to the structural rigidity and stability of the machine, as instead the panels of the present claimed invention may give.

Similar reasoning can be applied for the single wrapping panel (30) disclosed in Taub. The panel (30) disclosed in Taub rests between a circular lower groove (31) formed in the base (11) and a circular upper groove (32) formed in the shelf (12). The wrapping panel is simply kept closed by inserting two tabs (35) provided at one end of the panel inside two slits (34) provided at the opposite end. In this case, too, no restraint in the sense of the present claimed invention can be applied by the grooves (31, 32) or by the slits and tabs (34, 35), in order to impart some kind of force of deformation to the panels, which result in the fact that the panels of the present claimed invention, contrary to the solutions of the prior art documents cited in the Office Action, confer structural rigidity to the machine on which they are mounted.

Applicants again note that the characterizing feature of the present claimed invention is that the panels (13, 13a), when hooked on the hooks (22) and on the plates (24), are forcedly bent so as to confer a rigidity to the structure of the machine, which cannot be conferred neither by the panels (16) of Limberger nor by the wrapping panel (30) of Taub. In the present claimed invention, at the moment in which the flat panels (13, 13a) are assembled on the uprights, they are bent and their ends are forcedly inserted inside the hooks (22) of the respective uprights (12) and blocked between the plates (24) and the hooks (22).

In this way, the assembled panels (13) exert a force against the uprights (12) through the hooks (22), which confers high structural rigidity to the whole frame. In other words, each panel (13), when assembled and forcedly bent between two adjacent uprights (12), acts as a strut for the whole frame, thus giving structural rigidity and stability to the assembled frame which, before the panels are mounted, has not an implicit and own rigidity. This feature is embodied by the language *"support under restraint"* and *"impart to them a curvature"* already present in current claim 1, when referred to the connection means (22, 24) for the panels (13). Each panel (13, 13a) thus becomes an essential structural element of the frame, and not only a covering or wrapping element to delimit an inner area, as happens in Limberger and Taub.

Therefore, this feature of panels having a structural function, thanks to their curvature imparted at the moment of their assembly on the uprights, is not taught nor suggested in the prior art documents.

Regarding the rejection of claims 22-24 based on Limberger, Taub, Rauls and/or Priesemuth, these claims should be allowable at least based on their dependence from claim 14 for the same reasons described above.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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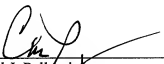
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